

Mass in Motion: Stories from the Field

Improving Gloucester's Sidewalks

When *Get Fit Gloucester!* Project Manager Stephen Winslow asked the City's Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Mike Hale the City routinely repaired sidewalks during regular re-paving jobs, he emphatically responded, "No, we just don't have the money to do that."

Knowing how desperately the city needed sidewalk improvements, Winslow and Sarah Garcia, Gloucester's Community Development Director, teamed up and asked for Mayor Carolyn Kirk's authorization to spend \$50,000 on the most important improvement projects. With Mayor Kirk's enthusiastic support, the Community Development Department worked with DPW Engineers to develop a list of priority sidewalk and ramp improvements for the roads DPW had already planned to repair in Spring 2010.

Staff identified sidewalks on three major roads and one residential street in Downtown that served low and moderate income residents. The problems with these sidewalks included curb cuts that were too high for stroller and ADA access, streets with damaged

or no curbs, broken patches of concrete and asphalt, and sidewalks that had not been re-paved in years.

Get Fit Gloucester! and Community Development staff came up with solutions for these much-needed sidewalk improvements, which included new concrete sidewalks, widened sidewalks, curb repairs, re-paving, and new ramps that met ADA regulations.

Staff also worked with MassHighway contractors to repair sidewalks and install bicycle-friendly storm drains. Mr. Winslow estimated the costs of all the recommended repairs to be substantially more than the \$50,000 available. With generous funding from DPW Director Hale, several sidewalks were repaired without dipping into the small amount allotted for other repairs. Community Development and DPW staff worked to trim other recommendations and prioritize so that the cost could be cut down to \$50,000 if necessary.

Due to the close collaboration between *Get Fit Gloucester!*, the Community Development Department, and the DPW, the sidewalk repairs were included in a



A Gloucester sidewalk before and after street improvements.

\$700,000 bid package issued by DPW. When the City received bids for the combined road and sidewalk project, the winning bid came in at \$570,000, allowing the City to fund all the final recommended sidewalk improvements.

DPW took on even more downtown sidewalk improvements during utility work, including a new sidewalk that closed a key gap between Downtown Gloucester and the Riverdale neighborhood. City residents have been enthusiastic about the number of sidewalk improvements the City made.

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